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RWU School of Continuing Studies to Deliver Workforce Development to Cities of Central Falls and Pawtucket

Unique partnership to provide contextualized education and development opportunities in support of each city's economic development efforts



June 30, 2016 | Public Affairs Staff

PROVIDENCE, R.I. – Roger Williams University School of Continuing Studies and the Cities of Central Falls and Pawtucket today announced a pair of unprecedented partnerships to deliver tailored programming to residents and community based organizations whose grassroots efforts provide critical support to their populations.

“Partnering with Central Falls and Pawtucket is an exceptional opportunity for Roger Williams and the School of Continuing Studies to deliver on our commitment to work collaboratively with communities to provide cultural and ecological contextualized economic development,” said Roger Williams University President Donald J. Farish. “We hope that this is just the first of many partnerships with municipalities where RWU can continue to provide a revolutionary model of engagement and immersion in Rhode Island’s urban communities.”

Working together with community-based organizations and local government officials, RWU will develop customized educational and certificate programming for Central Falls and Pawtucket residents, including workforce development and degree completion programs, and dual enrollment opportunities for middle and high school students that align to each city’s economic development goals.

"We are absolutely thrilled to be partnering with a higher education institution like Roger Williams University, along with President Farish and Dean Scurry, to bring a wide array of opportunities for our youth and residents," Central Falls Mayor James Diosa said. "We are all on the same page that workforce development and access to higher education is critical to our city's future."

"The communities of Pawtucket and Central Falls have partnered on many other initiatives in the past, but this new partnership is particularly exciting because it allows us to collaborate with the non-profit sector to ensure that the residents of our two communities are able to pursue opportunities to further their education and professional development," Pawtucket Mayor Donald R. Grebien said. "Our communities will be better-positioned for future growth with a highly-trained and educated work force."

The new partnership highlights the School of Continuing Studies' efforts to meet people where they are and support diverse communities throughout the state. Courses, including some available in Spanish, will be offered at the University's new Providence Campus, as well as at the high schools in Central Falls and Pawtucket. The agreement includes a reduced tuition structure for students, and all of the educational opportunities will align with both cities' current economic development efforts and priorities.

"Central Falls and Pawtucket present a unique opportunity for the School of Continuing Studies to develop a strategic relationship with an entire community to remove the barriers to education and workforce development that so often discourage engaged individuals from completing their degree or taking the next steps toward their career goals," said RWU School of Continuing Studies Dean Jamie Scurry. "It's an innovative partnership because, while other universities traditionally partner with a single community based organization or municipal department, Roger Williams is taking a more inclusive approach by engaging with entire cities. It is critical that we work collaboratively and create synergies that will reinforce each city's economic development efforts, while at the same time supporting the needs of these multicultural communities with incredibly personalized educational opportunities."

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